

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00370 01 OF 02 271437Z

45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 /026 W
----- 048776

O R 241800Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6723

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 0370

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2.)

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR JO EG SY LE XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER--EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: RIFAI REPORTED THINGS WERE BETTER INLEBANON
AND THAT LEBANESE WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO MAKE MUCH OF A
QUICK COMEBACK IN LARGE MEASURE BECAUSE ARAB MONEY WOULD
NOT FLOAT BACK QUICKLY TO BEIRUT.HE THOUGHTSYRIA HAD
GAINED IN LEBANON AND ELSEWHERE BECAUSE OF ITS UP TO NOW
SUCCESSFUL MEDIATION EFFORTS. BULK OF OUR CONVERSATION
CONCERNED EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. HIS TWO EMISSARIES WHOM
BY THE BAD LOCAL ECONOMIC SITUATION AND WHAT THEY SAID
WERE BROAD COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SADAT GOVERNMENT.
SADAT HAD GIVEN THEM A TOUGH THREE HOUR INTERVIEW IN
WHICH HE MADE IT CLEAR HE WOULD CONTINUE TO BATTLE WITH
SYRIA WAS UNHAPPY WITH THE JORDANIAN POSITION AND
WOULD RETALIATE IF JORDAN DID NOT SUPPORT EGYPT AS
WELL AS CONTINUING TO INSIST ON APPOINTING AN UNWELCOMED
AMBASSADOR AND HAVING PROVIDED KING A LATTER WHICH MIGHT
LATER BE USED PUBLICLY AGAINST THE JORDANIANS. SADAT
ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT HE HOPED FOR ANOTHER STEP FOR A
SINAI SETTLEMENT AND HE IMPLIED THAT THERE WAS SOME

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 00370 01 OF 02 271437Z

SORT OF PLAN WHEREBY SYRIA WOULD BE MILITARILY PRE

OCCUPIED IN THE NEAR FUTURE FOLLOWING WHICH EGYPT
COULD MOVE TOWARD ANOTHER STEP FOR A SINAI SETTLEMENT.
RIFAI DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS THAT SADAT PLAN WAS MADE IN USA
ALTHOUGH I MADE IT CLEAR THAT THIS WAS NONSENSE.
RIFAI ALSO THOUGHT THE ABOVE MIGHT WELL BE A PSYCHO
LOGICAL WARFARE CAMPAIGN IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AGAINST
SYRIA AND SECONDARILY AGAINST JORDAN. IN ANY EVENT
RIFA SEEMED TO HAVE CONCLUDED THAT HT SHOULD "LIE LOW"
IN THE TIME AHEAD AND AVOID SEEMING TO PULL TOO CLOSE
TO SYRIANS. END SUMMARY

1. I SAW PRIME MINISTER RIFAI MORNING JANUARY 24 FOR
A LONG DISCUSSION ON A NUMBER OF POINTS. PRINCIPLE
TOPIC COVERED WAS JORDANIAN-EGYPTIANS RELATIONS. IN
SHORT INITIAL INTRODUCTION, RIFAI SAID HE THOUGHT
THINGS WERE GOING WELL IN LEBANON, THAT SYRIANS WERE
INTENT ON TRYING TO COOL THE SITUATION DOWN, BUT THAT
BASIC SITUATION IN LEBANON HAD EVOLVED MORE FAVORABLY
TO SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS THAN TO CHRISTIANS. SYRIA
WOULD ENJOY CONSIDERABLE PRESTIGE IF IT SUCCEEDED.
LEBANON WOULD NOT QUICKLY RETURN TO ITS FORMER PROSPERITY
BECAUSE ARAB INVESTORS AND ARAB MONEY HAD LOST CON-
FIDENCE IN LEBANONE STABILITY. HE EXPECTED OVER TIME
THE NORMALLY RESILIENT LEBANESE WOULD PROSPER BUT THAT
IT WOULD BE SLOW.

2. MOVING ON THE EGYPTIAN ASKED RIFAI ABOUT THE REACTION
HE HAD TO THE VISIT OF HIS UNCLE ABDUL MONEM RIFAI
AND BAHJAT TALHOUNI WITH SADAT AND TO EGYPT IN GENERAL.

3. WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A RATHER LONG AND ON THE WHOLE
UNHAPPY LAMENT. THE TWO EMISSARIES WENT, RIFAI SAID
AS FRIENDS OF EGYPT. THEIR HEARTS ARE WITH EGYPT
EVEN BEFORE THEY SAW SADAT THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH
THE WIDE DEGREE TO WHICH EGYPTIANS WERE COMPLAINING
ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION. SADAT HAD OVERSOLD THE
EGYPTIAN PUBLIC ON WHAT THE US COULD DO FOR THE ECONOMY.
EGYPTIANS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT IT TAKES THE US TIME
TO DELIVER. THE EGYPTIAN POOR SEEMED TO BE GETTING NO
BETTER WHILE THERE IS WIDESPREAD COMPLAINING ABOUT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 00370 01 OF 02 271437Z

CORRUPTION, TOUCHING ON THE LIVES OF FAHMY AND SADAT.
STUDENTS HAVE BEGUN PRODUCING WALL NEWSPAPERS WHICH
DEAL WITH VARIOUS COMPLAINTS. BOTH EMISSARIES REPORT
DOMESTIC SITUATION IN EGYPT IS AS BAD AS THEY HAVE SEEN
IT. COMMENT SINCE RIFAI IS OFTEN FOND OF EXAGGERATING
FOR OUR BENEFIT IT REPORT HIS AS MORE OF A REFLECTION

OF JORDANIAN IMPRESSIONS AND ATTITUDES THAN AS AN

ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO THE EGYPTIAN DOMESTIC SITUATION. WE WOULD BE MOST ANXIOUS TO HAVE AMEMBASSY CAIRO COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE. RIFAI PROVIDED CERTAIN SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST PARTICULAR EGYPTIANS INCLUDING THE WIVES OF THE LEADERSHIP, WHICH CAIRO IS UNDOUBTEDLY FAMILIAR.

4. WHEN THE TWO EMISSARIES DID SEE SADAT THEY REPORT TO RIFAI THAT THEY WERE SHOCKED BY THE LOAD AND RUDE LANGUAGE TO WHICH THEY WERE TREATED. THEY SAID THAT SADAT WAS PARTICULARLY INTENSE IN HIS FEELINGS ABOUT SYRIA AND ASAD. THERE WAS NO SENSE IN HIS PRESENTATION ON ANY WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE OR BEING ABOUT AGREE MENT WITH SYRIA. SADAT'S STATEMENT WAS THAT EITHER HE OR ASAD HAD TO GO. THE ARAB WORLD WAS NOT BIG ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF THEM. HE WAS STRONGLY ANTI BAATHIST IN HIS COMMENTS.

5. WITH REGARD TO JORDAN, SADAT APPARENTLY LAID IT ON THE LINE. HE SAID THAT JORDAN WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN EGYPT OR SYRIA. AS FAR AS KING HUSSEIN WAS CONCERNED IT WOULD NOT CHANGE SADAT'S PERSONAL VIEW AS TO WHETHER JORDAN CHOSE SYRIA OR EGYPT. BUT IF JORDAN CHOSE SYRIA, THEY COULD EXPECT NO MORE POLITICAL SUPPORT ON JORDAN'S RETURNING TO THE WEST BANK FROM SADAT.

6. RIFAI ADDED THAT SADAT INSISTED ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR WHICH JORDAN HAD PREVIOUSLY ASKED TO LEAVE. HE SAID HE HAD MADE HIS OWN CHOICE AND HE WOULD NOT BACK DOWN. RIFAI SAID HE WILL NOT ACCEPT HIM EVEN IF IT MEANS CLOSING THE EMBASSIES IN BOTH COUNTRIES: WE WILL SIT ON THE REQUEST FOR SADAT APPARENTLY HAD WRITTEN A LONG LETTER TO THE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 AMMAN 00370 01 OF 02 271437Z

KING. RIFAI SAID WHILE THE TONE WAS UNEXCEPTIONAL THE LETTER (8 PAGES LONG) APPEARED TO BE WRITTEN FOR PUBLICATION. IN A BACKHANDED WAY, IT CHIDED JORDANIANS FOR STAYING OUT OF THE 73 WAR AND FOR HAVING TAKEN ONE SET OF POSIITIONS ON SIANI II IN PRIVATE AND ANOTHER IN PUBLIC. RIFAI SAID HE IS NOW BUSY PREPARING A "16 PAGE RESPONSE" WHICH WILL HE SAYS MAKE CLEAR THAT EGYPTIANS SENT THEM MESSAGES TO STAY OUT OF THE WAR IN 73 AND THE JORDANIANS HAD CONSISTENTLY REPORTED THEIR FEELINGS TO EGYPTIAN ANALYSIST LIKE MARWAN AND MUBARAK. JORDAN REPLY WILL ALSO BE FOR PUBLICATION IF THIS IS REQUIRED

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00370 02 OF 02 241942Z

43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 021309

O P 241745Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6724

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 0370

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

7. COMMENT: VISIT WAS OBVIOUSLY ANYTHING BUT A HOWLING
SUCCESS. I ASKED RIFAI WHAT POSITION HE WOULD BE TAKING
IN THE FUTURE. HE SAID IT WAS PROBABLY NOW TIME TO
HUNKER DOWN A LITTLE BIT AND AVOID GETTING TOO FAR
FORWARD WITH SYRIANS. JORDANIANS ARE OBVIOUSLY NOT HAPPY

WITH WHAT THEY GOT FROM SADAT AND
APPEAR TO BE GENERALLY AGHAST AT WHAT THEY CLAIM WAS
THE GUTTER LANGUAGE HE USED; BUT NEVERTHELESS JORDANIANS ARE
REALISTICALLY TRYING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT. END COMMENT.

8. RIFAI APPEARED TO BE PARTICULARLY SHAKEN BY WHAT
SADAT HAD TO SAY ON NEXT STEPS. SADAT TOLD
JORDANIANS EMISSARIES HE EXPECTS THIS YEAR BEFORE US ELECTIONS
TO ACHIEVE AN ADDITIONAL DISENGAGEMENT OR PERHAPS EVEN A SETTLE-
MENT. THE SETTLEMENT WOULD INVOLVE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE SINAI ACCORDING TO RIFAI. SADAT SAID HE WILL
GO IT ALONE AND DO THAT IF HE HAS TO. HE SAID HE THOUGHT
THAT SYRIANS WOULD FULLY PREOCCUPIED AND NOT IN A
POSITION TO SLOW HIM DOWN. RIFAI SAID HE UNDERSTANDS
THIS MEANS THAT SADAT IS SOMEHOW COUNTING ON ISRAELI
MILITARY ACTION AGAINST SYRIA AND HE IMPLIED AGAINST
JORDAN IN ORDER TO PERMIT SADAT IN THE AFTERMATH TO TAKE ANOTHER
STEP AT A TIME WHEN SYRIA WOULD BE PROSTRATE MILITARILY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 00370 02 OF 02 241942Z

RIFAI ALSO SAID SADAT WAS FULLY PREPARED TO GO TO GENEVA EVEN IF THE OTHER ARAB REFUSED TO ATTEND, IMPLYING THAT HE WOULD NEED ONLY THE US, SOVIETS AND THE ISRAELIS.

9. RIFAI THEN ASKED RHETORICALLY ABOUT WHERE SADAT MAY HAVE GOTTEN THIS APPROACH AND THSE IDEAS. WHILE HE DID NOT SAY SO I SAID THAT IF HE WAS CONCLUDING THAT SUCH AN APPROACH CAME FROM THE UNITED STATES HE WAS INDEED WRONG. HE SAID THAT WHAT THE SYRIANS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE SOVIETS IN CONNECTION WITH LEBANON (THAT THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR SOVIET FRIENDS) MIGHT APPLY HERE WITH RESPONSE TO THE US. I SAID THERE WAS NOTHING TO THIS SUCH AS STRATEGY WOULD NOT IN THE LEAST SERVE OUT INTERESTS IN THE AREA AND THAT HE SHOULD KNOW BY NOW THAT SUCH A CONCLUSION WAS COMPLETELY UNWARRANTED. HE ALLUDED IN REPLY TO INFORMATION JORDAN HAD BEEN GLEANING ABOUT THE ISRAELIS WHO RIFAI SAID HE WOULD NOT DISMISS THE PUBLICITY CHARGING THAT THE ISRAELIS AND THE EGYPTIANS THEMSELVES HAD SOME KING OF TACIT AGREEMENT ON THE SUBJECT: HE SAID THERE HAD BEEN A HIGH DEGREE OF DEMOBILIZATION IN THE EGYPTIAN ARMY AND THIS SEEMED TO BE SOMETHING THE EGYPTIANS HAD DONE IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THE ISRAELIS. HE ALSO CITED THE FACT SADAT SAID HE WOULD GO IT ALONE IN GENEVA.

10. THEN ON REFLECTION RIFAI SAID "OBVIOUSLY IF SADAT TOLD US THE THE JORDANIANS HE WOULD KNOW THAT WE WOULD TELL SYRIANS. MAYBE IT IS A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE TO KEEP THE SYRIANS JUMPY UNCERTAIN AND ON THE EDGE."

11. COMMENT: WHATEVER RIFAI CONCLUDES HE HAS LET ME KNOW THAT THIS PARTICULAR TACTIC ON THE PART OF SADAT WILL REINFORCE HIS DECISION TO LIE LOW IF HE CAN DO SO FOR THE NEAR FUTURE. JORDANIANS ARE STILL VERY MUCH AFRAID OF BEING CHEWING UP IN A MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE AREA. END COMMENT.

12. FINALLY, I ASKED RIFAI ABOUT THE SAUDI ATTITUDE TOWARD EGYPT. HE SAID THE SAUDIS WOULD CONTINUE TO SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 00370 02 OF 02 241942Z

SUPPORT EGYPT FOR TWO REASONS--THEY FEEL THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SADAT WILL BRING IN A COMMUNIST REGIME AND THEY HAVE STRONG BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT TIES IN CAIRO WHICH REINFORCE THEIR DESIRE TO SUPPORT SADAT CONTINUING AS AN EGYPTIAN LEADER.

PICCKERING

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976AMMAN00370
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760030-1017
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760125/aaaaavwk.tel
Line Count: 278
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS <MCM 20040723 CORRECTION>; STADIS, EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 MAY 2004 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040723
Subject: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER--EGYPTIAN RELATIONS SUMMARY: RIFAI REPORTED THINGS WERE BETTER INLEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, JO, EG, SY, LE, XF, (RIFAI, ZAID), (SADAT, ANWAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006